The Blow That Recoiled

By CHARLES A. JOHNSON

There was small margin of difference between the two men, so far as eyes could see, as they threw off their coats and sprang each to his own canoe. Their paddles flashed into and out of the water, sending the frail crafts over the smooth surface of the lake at remarkable speed. Neither one gained appreciably on the other, though they were racing with intense rivalry.

As they had sat in front of their tent awaiting the arrival of the merry launching party from across the lake, they had witnessed an accident which, even without the added incentive of rivalry, made each man strain his every nerve to reach the goal. The launch had struck on a rock beside the narrow channel and, careening suddenly on her side, had filled and gone down.

Harry Morton and Jim Carruthers were not men who could see women drown without drowning with them. But, as they paddled, each man's heart grew chill with the awful thought that the woman he loved was one of the struggling group, and they loved the same woman.

This love was born, as love sometimes is, in the idle time of a summer holiday. They had gone to the lake for rest, each man fancy free. Sworn comrades, they had even laughed at love and planned to live as they were, fond of the same things and looking for no deeper interest than they found in each other and in mutual pleasures.

But before the first week in camp was over Morton had developed a hitherto undiscovered fondness for walking, and for hours at a time he was absent from camp. Carruthers had about the same time found himself to be devoted to canoeing, but neither of the men said much to the other about his newly discovered pastime. In truth, Morton sought a dryad whom he had seen in the woods as he paddled along the shore one morning; Carruthers pur-

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sued a vision of loveliness that had flashed past him in a canoe while he lay on the bank smoking his pipe.

Their quest continued for days, each man thinking to achieve an encounter by seeking his enchantress where he had seen her once. But they did not find her until together they met her at an informal hop at the big hotel on the hill.

From that moment they were rivals, and each one knew it instinctively, though not a word was spoken. The old comradeship was as if it never had been. A woman had come between them, and neither man realized how bitter his jealousy was till they had leaped into their canoes to paddle to the rescue of that woman.

Mrs. Starleigh did not care which one should win Irene Campbell when she had undertaken to chaperon that young woman for the summer. She had vowed secretly, however, being a born matchmaker, to see her fair charge matrimonially disposed of before the season should end. Either one of the young men seemed desirable in her eyes, and she was willing to encourage both in the hope that one would succeed.

When, therefore, both men entreated her to bring a party of girls over to their camp for a picnic she understood and made the engagement readily.

The day had proved to be a perfect one, and the party started in the highest spirits. They were already waving salutes to their hosts when the crash came.

As the two men approached the spot Morton said: "We have our work cut out for us, Jim. The skipper seems to be able to take care of himself, though he's too frightened to help much. There are six women. You take the three to the right. I'll take the others. Better help them to the canoe and swim ashore with them separately. It isn't much of a swim if we can get to them in time. That point of land reaches out on the left within 200 yards." He indicated the narrow neck not far off.

Carruthers nodded with a satisfied look in his eyes. He had noted that Miss Campbell was among those on the right. Morton had seen it, too, but as his own canoe was on Carruthers' left he would not risk the few moments it would have taken to make a different arrangement.

"Make a jest of it," was all he said after outlining the plan. "If we laugh about it we may keep them from too great a panic." And again Carruthers nodded.

The two athletes plunged into the water with a merry whoop. When they neared the frightened women they were paddling feebly while they screamed, helping one another as best they could. None of them had disappeared, but they were perilously near sinking.

It was the work of a few moments to help four girls to the sides of the two canoes. Morton took Mrs. Starleigh in charge, while Carruthers started for the shore with Miss Campbell.

Morton was a little in the lead, and when he had landed his charge he turned for the return swim, but was horrified to see Carruthers on his back, struggling violently and clinging to Miss Campbell as if she were a life buoy.

He understood it immediately. Carruthers had been seized with a cramp and had lost his head.

"Loosen your hold or you'll both sink!" he shouted as he swam toward them, but Carruthers was past reasoning with.

There was only one thing to do. When he came within reach he struck Carruthers such a blow on the point of the jaw the latter was stunned and let go.

Then a few strokes carried Miss Campbell to land, and Horton turned back for his friend. Diving, he found him near the bottom and brought him also to shore. He put him in charge of the two women, who were unhurt and already recovering from their fright.

The rescue of the others was accomplished quickly, and the whole party, water soaked, but safe, were soon congratulating themselves and showering thanks on their rescuers.

Morton got his lion's share of the praise, but he noticed with a pang that Miss Campbell was constrained and almost formal in what she said.

And when some weeks later he ventured to propose to her she said, with evident distress: "I am more sorry than I know how to say that you have asked me this question. I never can forget what you did for us all, but the horror of that blow you struck—neither can I forget that. It seemed like a murder."

So Morton knew his fate. That night, while they were smoking their last pipe he said to Carruthers: "Goodby, Jim. I'm off in the morning. You may never see me again, and if you don't, teach her to forgive me even if she can't forget the blow I struck my best friend to save the woman I loved."

Consideration Point.

An old boatman at a fashionable resort on the east coast of England was engaged by a party of ladies to row them to a local cave known as the Smugglers' Retreat.

After pulling away in silence for twenty minutes or so the old man suddenly ceased rowing at a spot not fifty yards from the cave.

"Now, ladies," he remarked calmly, "we've reached Consideration point."

"Consideration point!" echoed the spokeswoman of the party. "What a peculiar name! Why Consideration point?"

"Weel, it's just this way, mum," explained the cunning old fellow. "Theer," pointing to the cave, "is the cave; here's the boat. Between the cave an' the boat theer's a lot o' narsty sunken rocks, an' this is Consideration point, 'cos parties allus stops here to consider whether they'll go the long an' safe way round for 18 pence or trust to luck an' them theer rocks for a shillin'!"

The ladies didn't know that "them theer rocks" were purely imaginary, and 18 pence was the fare agreed upon. —London Queen.

His Detailed Report.

When it was first arranged to have postmasters send in quarterly reports many queer documents were received. One, which is still on file in the postoffice department, came from the little town of Waterford, Ill., and is as follows:

July the 9 1856. Muster jimes buchanan, president of United States—Dear Sur Bean required by the instructions of the postoffice to report quarterly, I now fooinl that pleasin duty by reportin as follows. The Harvestin has been goin on pretty well and most of the naburs have got thur cuttin about dun, wheet is hardly an average crop, on rollin lans corn is yellowish and wont cut more than ten or fifteen booshils to the akir and the helth of the comittie is only tolerbly meesils and colery hav broke out in about 2 and a half miles of hear thair are a powerful awaken on the subjes of religin in the potts naburhood and more souls are bean made to know thur sins forgivin miss nancy Smith a neer nabur had twins day before yesterday and one of them is a poor scraggy thing and wont live half its days this is about all I know and have to report this quarter give my respects to Mrs bucanan and subscrib myself your Trooly, Abagail Jenkins.

High Time.

Every one knows that nerves are delicate things, easily disturbed and difficult to keep in order. Mr. Underfoot, loyal husband that he was, had learned this lesson.

"Yes, the doctor said Jenny ought to have a change of air, and she's gone to a kind of a rest cure place for awhile," said Mr. Underfoot to one of his old friends, while his gaze was carefully fixed on the distant landscape.

"Tired out?" inquired the friend.

"No," said Mr. Underfoot slowly, "she wasn't tired out, for she hadn't done anything to tire her. But she was always kind of high strung, and toward the last of it she got real nervous. One day I just happened to inquire what time dinner was to be, for it had varied about two hours one way or another, and she was making molasses gingerbread, and my asking that question upset her nerves so that she poured the batter right over me before I could move off. So next day she went to the rest cure."

Some Tales That Are Worth Telling

MRS. D. decided to move into the country for the summer last year and was both surprised and delighted to learn that an old friend of hers resided in the same place. Meeting this friend on the street, Mrs. D. said:

"I am quite a near neighbor of yours now. I have taken a house by the river."

"Oh, I do hope you will drop in some day," replied the friend.

A Philadelphia business man tells this one on himself:

"You know in this city there are two telephone companies," he said, "and in my office I have a telephone of each company. Last week I hired a new office boy, and one of his duties was to answer the telephone. The other day when one of the bells rang he answered the call and then came in and told me I was wanted on the phone by my wife.

"'Which one?' I inquired quickly, thinking of the two telephones, of course.

"'Please, sir,' stammered the boy, 'I don't know how many you have.'"

A builder in Pennsylvania, having heard that the men did not start work at the proper time, thought he would drop down about 6:30 one morning and see. Going up the yard, he caught sight of a joiner standing smoking, with his kit not even opened. Simply asking his name, which he found to be Jake Robertson, he called him into the office and, handing him four days' pay, told him to leave at once.

After having seen the man clear of the yard he went up to the foreman and told him he had made an example of Jake Robertson by paying him off for not starting to work at the proper time.

"Jumping Jupiter, sir," ejaculated the foreman, "that chap was only looking for a job!"—New York World.

A Natural Sequence.

Mabel—Would you believe it, auntie, two men followed us down to the pier?

Marian—Yes, auntie, every step of the way.

Aunt—How did you know?

Mabel—We saw them every time we looked back.

Marian—Yes, auntie, and they followed us on the boat.

Aunt—What makes you think they were following you?

Mabel—Because we noticed them watching us every time we turned our heads.

Aunt—Ah, I thought your heads were turned!—Chicago Record-Herald.

An Improvement.

"What advice did your father give you when you left home?"

"He told me to saw wood and say nothing."

"Did you do as he said?"

"No, sir," replied the politician. "I have found that it is better to saw wood and talk."—Detroit Free Press.

Foolish Man!

He doesn't believe that advertisements tell the truth.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Wasted on Him.

Miss Hicks—I hear you called upon Miss Suttle the other night. Did she show you her birthday presents?

Mr. Staylate—Only a parlor clock her father had given her. She called my attention to it several times and remarked that she thought it was slow.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Well Stocked.

"They say the Widow Longgreen can think of nothing but money."

"Well, she has a remarkably well stocked mind."

"Well stocked!"

"Yes, a million and a quarter in bank stock at 250 above par."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Peculiar Case.

Grace—But she couldn't think of marrying anybody so dreadfully unconventional.

Helen—And is he, really?

Grace—Why, yes. Why, when he proposed he didn't tell her he couldn't live without her!—Baltimore News.

Sick of His Bargain.

She—He had a long sickness, you say?

He—Yes, and has since married the nurse.

"What is the result?"

"Oh, he's sicker now than he was before."—Yonkers Statesman.

A Motto Contradicted.

"Pay as you go," said the bustling man. "That's my motto."

"Don't believe a word of it," answered the man who is constantly running into debt. "If my paying and going kept pace I'd be walking backward."—Washington Star.

WILD BABOONS.

An Incident Which Illustrates the Caution of the Animals.

One of the farm boys drew our attention to what seemed little more than a couple of dark specks on the slope of the hills to the right, but we could soon see that they were moving, and when they came within half a mile of us we could distinctly recognize them as a herd of baboons.

The boy said that he was quite sure they were on their way to the water; but, to our surprise, they did not make any advance. A quarter of an hour elapsed, half an hour; still no sign of their approach. All at once, as if they had started from the earth by magic, at the open end of the pond, not sixty yards from our place of ambush, stood two huge males.

When or how they got there no one could tell. Probably they had come by a circuitous way through the valley, or it might be that they had crept straight down through the grass. They had certainly eluded our observation.

Being anxious to watch the movements of the animals and to ascertain whether they belonged to the herd playing under the mimosas, I refrained from firing and determined to see what would follow next. Both baboons sprang toward the water, and, leaning down, they drank till they were satisfied. Then, having gravely stretched themselves, they solemnly stalked away on all fours in the direction of the herd. There was little doubt, therefore, that they belonged to the herd and had been sent forward to reconnoiter, for as soon as they got back the entire herd put itself in motion toward the pond.

There were mothers takin[illegible]re of their little ones; there were h[illegible]own animals, the boys and girls of [illegible]mpany. At first only one baboon at a time came to the water's edge and, having taken its draft, retired to the rest, but when about ten had thus ventured separately they began to come in small groups, leaving the others rolling and jumping on the sand.—Youth's Companion.

ODD FACTS ABOUT DEER.

Wonderful Jumpers, With a Marvelous Sense of Smell.

"Deer are wonderful jumpers, as may be imagined," says a writer. "I have seen a hind clear fifteen feet or so and buck as high as a tall man merely to avoid a small drain, and also, at a drive, I have seen a stag jump clear over one of the beaters, taking a fence at the same time. There is still extant the record of a famous leap made by a stag down on the borders of Ettick during a hunt by one of the old Scottish kings. The place is known as 'the Hart's Leap,' and is commemorated by two stones, which the monarch had erected to mark the spot. They measure twenty-eight feet apart.

"Deer have a marvelous sense of smell. With a strong wind blowing they will scent a man a mile off. Yet, though their powers of scent are marvelous, I confess to having had one illusion quickly dispelled. From reading various old books on the subject I had come to regard their sight as something quite abnormal and fondly imagined that, on spying deer, say, a mile or so away, a cautious advance was necessitated, after the manner of our ancient enemy, the serpent.

"Now, though deer do have good sight, they are certainly inferior in this respect to the roe, and so long as you keep perfectly still, will have great difficulty in detecting you. I proved this again and again one July when trying to obtain photographs of wild deer. I did not get any photographs, though plenty of experience, but I was often lying within fifteen yards of deer without their being conscious of my presence."

Perpetual Noon.

One of the oddities of our system of reckoning time is exemplified in the question as to what time the north pole keeps. In theory all places on one meridian of longitude keep the same time; therefore the north pole, being the central point of all meridians, must necessarily have all times. Should the pole ever become habitable the resident would be able to have day or night at any hour (in theory) by electing to take his time from a meridian to correspond. Should such an unexpected event ever occur there would have to be made some readjustment of our present system of reckoning time to suit the arctic regions.

Photographing Lightning.

An English writer tells how lightning "sits" for its photograph: "Lightning can only be photographed at night. It is also impossible to use any cap or shutter for this work, inasmuch as the eyes do not observe a flash of lightning till at least a tenth of a second after it has passed. So that, having focused your camera beforehand, draw the shutter and hold the camera in the direction you think the flash will take and you must trust to the courtesy of the lightning to be there on time."

Bespoken.

"I can attend to that divorce case for you, if you like," suggested his friend, the lawyer.

"I'm sorry, old man," replied the western Benedict, "but the fact is I promised the case to a friend of mine before I was married."—New York Press.

Building Rome.

Teacher—Tommy, when was Rome built? Tommy—In the night. Teacher—How came you to make such a mistake? Tommy—You said yesterday Rome wasn't built in a day.—School Board Journal.

All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not honesty and good nature. —Montaigne.